

PARKS AND RECREATION COMMITTEE

DATE: August 18, 2005

CALLED TO ORDER: 5:00 p.m.

ADJOURNED: 6:11 p.m.

ATTENDANCE

Attending Members

Monroe Gray, Jr., Chairman
Vernon Brown
Bob Cockrum
Susie Day
Ron Gibson
William Oliver
Earl Salisbury

Absent Members

Dane Mahern

BUDGET HEARING

Resource Development Division
Golf Division
Greenways Division
Park Rangers Division

PARKS AND RECREATION COMMITTEE

The Parks and Recreation Committee of the City-County Council met on Thursday, August 18, 2005. Chairman Monroe Gray, Jr. called the meeting to order at 5:00 p.m. with the following members present: Vernon Brown, Bob Cockrum, Ron Gibson, William Oliver, and Earl Salisbury. Arriving shortly thereafter was Susie Day. Absent was Dane Mahern.

Joseph Wynns, Director, Department of Parks and Recreation (DPR), distributed Exhibit A, in response to a request from the last meeting. He noted that Corporation Counsel works in cooperation with outside appraisers to be sure that the lease agreements are fair market value.

Resource Development Division City Budget Book, page 41

Don Colvin, Administrator, Resource Development Division, explained that Resource Development oversees planning, design, construction, and real estate.

Mr. Colvin stated that in 2004 the Real Estate Division brought in over 100 acres of land. In 2005, there has been a strong focus on the First Tee Project along the Monon Trail at 25th Street. Eight of the twelve properties are already under ownership, and the rest should follow at the end of the year. In the Planning and Design section, three park Master Plans have been completed.

Mr. Colvin stated that there have been many activities in Construction. By year-end, work will have been completed on Bethel Family Community Center, Rhodius Family Community Center, Garfield Arts Center, and the soccer complex at 56th and Reed Road.

Mr. Colvin explained that the department lost a Senior Planner through attrition, so this will have some effect on the timeliness of some design work and improvements on capital projects. He said that despite the large amount of requests that come in from citizens, the division will still maintain the quality of work and deliver the product in the most timely fashion. He noted that projects will be prioritized by need; safety will be the main concern, with repairs and replacements of roofs, electrical, and resurfacing hard courts.

Mr. Colvin said that the 2006 commitments include the last of the Lilly grant projects, with completion of the Earth Discovery Center at Eagle Creek Park. Construction will begin in 2006. There is also ongoing construction at the Thatcher Golf Clubhouse, and the department will continue work on site plans for the community as well as trying to bring in new park land using limited tax dollars.

Councillor Salisbury said that when a property comes from a developer, a lot of times the developer keeps the property and puts it in their neighborhood association and it

becomes their responsibility to pay dues on it, etc. He said it is obviously an advantage for the developer and the neighborhood association not to have the additional burden of the property taxes. However, he said it also reduces the income for that township or community because it is no longer a taxable property. He asked if the advantage for the developer and neighborhood association is used in negotiating. Mr. Colvin answered that by passing that land into the public domain, DPR guarantees it is open space.

Wayne Simpson, CEO, DPR, explained that all reductions are due to meeting the 10% budget reduction goal for this particular division. Everything else is within guidelines.

Councillor Cockrum asked if any of the reductions have anything to do with the completion of the Lilly funding. Mr. Simpson replied in the negative. Councillor Cockrum referred to Character 03, Subobject 362 (Building Maintenance and Repair) and asked why this line was eliminated. Mr. Simpson answered that this will shift over into the Maintenance section. Councillor Cockrum asked about Character 04, Subobject 405 (Buildings) and noted a \$1.2 million cutback. He asked if this was because of the Lilly grant funding. Mr. Simpson answered in the affirmative. Jeff Seidenstein, Controller's Office, further explained that in looking at the grand total for Character 04, this is the actual reduction in this budget. It is a \$220,000 reduction from the original 2005 budget. Everything else is complicated by the fact that a grant was appropriated after the year began.

Golf Division

City Budget Book, page 37

Lou Hurrle, Golf Administrator, summarized that over the past winter and spring, DPR was able to take the Junior Golf Summer Program and visit several Indianapolis Public Schools (IPS). He noted that working through the schools' Physical Education departments, the Golf Program was able to reach over 1,600 youth. The ultimate goal is to get golf to be part of the regular physical education program.

The Summer Golf Program at Whispering Hills had 636 youths involved from various groups.

Mr. Hurrle stated that as far as the 2006 budget impact, with golf being driven basically by revenue, the golf budget is basically flat and has no negative impact on the golf revenue. He said that concerning Golf Division Service Commitments for 2006, DPR hopes to break ground for the First Tee Project.

Chair Gray asked how the Golf Division prioritizes who gets a new clubhouse. Mr. Hurrle answered that the clubhouses right now are being broken down by age and accessibility for the public.

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Councillor Brown asked which course brings in the most revenue. Mr. Hurrle said that Sahm Golf Course, based on rounds, brings in the most revenue.

Mr. Simpson pointed out that the Committee will see that there are some objects where there has been underspending this year. This was put in for anticipation of the First Tee Project opening this year. It will not open this year, so there will be some underspending.

Greenways Division
City Budget Book, page 33

Ray Irvin, Greenways Administrator, distributed Exhibit B, which is a letter from Greg Silver, Chairman of the Greenways Committee.

Mr. Irvin explained that this year Greenways has had eight projects. He said the Division has had an opportunity to work with the water company this year, which is in the process of developing a new trail as part of their canal improvements. This trail will tie into both downtown and the Monon Greenway project in Broad Ripple. The Eagle Creek Trail, between 46th Street and 56th Street is nearing completion now, and he anticipates a ribbon-cutting in the next 60 days. He added that Greenways is working with the Indiana Department of Transportation (INDOT) on two tunnels under I-465's expansion on the west side, which is along 71st street and 86th Street. These will both connect the Eagle Creek Greenway into Northwestway Park and into the communities in this area as the interstate gets completed.

Mr. Irvin said there is a new Monon access with the YMCA, and the division has been working with Key Learning Schools on Town Run Trail Park on an education program. There have also been some improvements to Pogue's Run, IUPUI, and in the Eagle Creek area. He added that Greenways is working on three research projects. He said that Indianapolis leads the country right now in Greenways. He also said that Greenways has had several events on the trail this year and have done four clean-ups while continuing to develop new partnerships.

Mr. Simpson explained that there are some budget reductions in this division. He explained that most cuts, with the exception of Character 05, are very minimal. He referred to Subobject 550 (Interdepartmental Charges) and explained that the \$275,000 reduction was a maintenance agreement with DPW.

Chair Gray commented that it is odd to utilize DPW people to clean up the Greenways, but there are not enough DPW people to pick up residential trash.

Councillor Cockrum referred to Character 04, Subobject 440 (Infrastructure). He said there was an expenditure for this year, and then it zeroed out again. Mr. Simpson explained that this was a grant that occurred for this year only.

Park Rangers

City Budget Book, page 45

Mr. Wynns noted that the Park Rangers are the backbone that keeps the parks safe, and they do an excellent job with the small staff that there is.

Lieutenant Donald Terheide, Park Rangers, listed some recent accomplishments for the division, which include:

- Working with the Indianapolis Police Department's Missing Persons Unit and training the rangers to be more responsive to locate lost individuals in the parks system, in particular children
- Increase training with the IPD Dive Team for better water rescue
- More attention given to weekend boat patrols at Eagle Creek Park
- Increasing the number of Park Ranger Reserves

Lieutenant Terheide stated that there has been a reduction of four Park Rangers due to budgetary cuts. He said this impacts the parks system because it causes a reduction in:

- Rangers checking the parks and pools
- Ranger programs, such as in schools and parks
- Special event coverage

Lieutenant Terheide said that the goals for 2006 include:

- Continue implementation of new key system through the Risk Management Office
- Continue to increase the number of Park Ranger Reserves
- Maintain the safety of parks property and Greenways
- Continue weekend Park Ranger watch on Greenways and boat patrol programs at Eagle Creek Park
- Continue to grow and cultivate the Park Watch Program to work more closely with neighborhoods

Councillor Gibson asked if the Park Rangers have a better understanding of the diverse populations in particular areas of the city, noting that in the past there have been some misunderstandings with respect to Riverside Park users.

Lieutenant Terheide answered in the affirmative, noting that Riverside Park is frequently busy in the summer, in particular with traffic congestion and car stereo noise. He added that the Park Rangers have taken special measures to be involved with the Riverside Civic League. Chair Gray commented that parking is a continuous problem at Riverside because many activities take place inside the facilities and, when the opportunity arose to build a parking lot, the neighbors did not want it.

Councillor Oliver asked if the Park Rangers attend IPD roll call. Lieutenant Terheide answered that occasionally they will, but it varies.

Councillor Salisbury asked if it is common for all Park Rangers to have a take-home vehicle. Lieutenant Terheide answered that the full-time Rangers have one and a few of the Reserve officers. Councillor Salisbury asked how many vehicles there are. Lieutenant Terheide said there are 26 vehicles. Councillor Salisbury asked if the Park Rangers have ever considered using horses for patrol. Lieutenant Terheide answered in the negative and said that with current budget constraints it would be difficult to do this.

Mr. Simpson noted two items of interest in the division's budget. He referred to Character 01, Subobject 100 (Salaries – Biweekly) and said that this shows the reduction of four rangers. He also referred to Character 02, Subobject 245 (Uniform and Personal Supplies) and pointed out that there is not a \$6,400 reduction; rather, it is a transfer to Character 01, Subobject 102 (Salaries – Uniform). He said the latest Union contract allows DPR to give Rangers a uniform allowance which comes out of the payroll system.

Chair Gray noted that he would be paying particular attention to the take-home vehicle policy because of past miscommunication concerning the cost of some vehicles that had been damaged. He also said he is concerned about payback to the City for the cost of fuel for these vehicles.

With no further business pending, and upon motion duly made, the Parks and Recreation Committee of the City-County Council was adjourned at 6:11 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Monroe Gray, Jr., Chair
Parks and Recreation Committee